

me the opportunity to respond to my friend from North Carolina, who suggested that I was misguided by opposing the bill. Perhaps I am misguided, because the bill increases crime and I am trying to reduce crime.

We know that increasing jobs will reduce crime. This bill, we know, reduces jobs. The goal of FPI has been traditionally for 25 percent of the jobs to be FPI jobs. As a result of the initiatives in this bill, many of which were enacted in 2001, the percentage of jobs has gone from 25 to 18, 2,000 fewer jobs. And if we had maintained the 25 percent, there would be 9,000 more people working in FPI jobs, with a much lower chance of getting into trouble when they are released.

This reduction in jobs will increase crime. Maybe opposing an increase in crime is misguided, but I think we ought to reguide ourselves and support those initiatives, which will actually reduce crime, not increase crime, as this bill does.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute to point out that this bill does not increase crime because we have got a vocational educational training program for inmates that will prepare them not only in vocational skills but prepare them as a whole person.

So to say that we are increasing crime because we are phasing out this Federal Prison Industries program is not exactly accurate. Besides, there is a not-for-profit section that we are going to ramp up. Local governments, school districts, and religious organizations will all be able to benefit under this new provision to create more jobs.

And so I just want to guarantee everybody, and particularly my friend from Virginia, that if this doesn't create more jobs, then I want to change the law myself. But to predict that this is what we are doing is not exactly accurate.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK).

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member, and I speak strongly in support of this bill. I have not yet had anyone explain to me why it is our strong policy to ban the products of prison labor that come over in trade, but we then encourage them to compete with American workers if it is domestic prison labor.

I agree it is a good idea for inmates to have work opportunities, but I am hoping that marketing is not one of those things in which prisoners engage. That is, it is the actual process of making the product that has its rehabilitative effect. And as the gentleman from Michigan just mentioned, it is the intention of many of us to increase the extent to which prisoners could be used to make products that could be distributed to various entities in our society in a way that wouldn't be competitive with the market.

But I do not understand how you tell low-wage workers, because the level at

which the prison products exist is at the low-wage level, how do we tell low-wage workers they are going to lose their jobs because of prisoners? How do you tell people who have been hard-working people trying to support themselves and their families that prisoners are taking their jobs because of the inherent subsidy that is involved?

Now, the way to resolve that, it seems to me, is to leave the market, to the extent that we can, to people who are in the market, in the private sector; and try, as the gentleman from Michigan said, as we try in this legislation, to increase the extent to which prisoners can be employed and learn skills and make products that will be distributed to the nonmarket segment. And there is no loss there. Again, the marketing is not part of the prison experience and shouldn't be.

So it is entirely possible to have prisoners learning skills, improving their skills by producing things that can then be distributed to a nonmarket segment. But the fundamental principle that we should not allow prison labor to take jobs away from hard-working people, particularly at the low-wage level, is at the core of this bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I would yield 1 minute more, this is very unusual, but I will yield 1 minute more to Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding, because, as I indicated, as a result of the initiatives that are in this bill, we have already lost thousands of jobs. And if we had had the law as it was in 2000, we would have about 9,000 more people working.

The gentleman from Massachusetts has said there are other alternatives. If we were guaranteed funding for that, I would support it. The problem is that the FPI pays for itself, so it doesn't need appropriation. If we can guarantee the funding, there wouldn't be any debate on this. The job training also may not have funding. So we don't know that that is going to take place. So there is no guarantee.

The problem with this approach is that there is no guarantee for funding. The FPI program pays for itself, and has been paying for itself for over 70 years. It works well. We know it works, and the replacements are just speculative.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. My problem with my friend from Virginia's argument, well, there are two; first of all, if there are 9,000 fewer jobs in Prison Industries, that means there are 9,000 more jobs in the private sector.

So the second point is that he concedes that if we funded this it wouldn't be a problem. Well, rather than put the burden on lower-wage working people in the garment industry, the furniture industry, et cetera, then let us work to get the funding. It is not a huge

amount. But there is, to some extent, a replacement of prison jobs and private sector jobs.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. First of all, we will work together on the funding, no question about that. Furthermore, there is not a one-to-one replacement. You have about four people in prison working on what would otherwise be one job.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Well, then I would say this. Then that further reinforces the point. Because what you are then saying is the underpayment, the subsidy element is such that you are still losing private sector jobs to prison jobs.

And I would say to the gentleman, let us end on a note of approval. Yes, I look forward to working with the gentleman for better funding, and if things go well in November it will be easier than it has been.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman of the committee for yielding time.

I rise in opposition to this bill. Now, I represent two prisons in my district, and grandma used to say that idle hands are the devil's workshop. We have to find ways to keep these people busy; but, more importantly, we have to give them real job skills.

Now, I understand that in some cases this may be taking jobs away from the private sector, but that is very rare, Members. Mostly what we are doing in those prisons today are jobs that either aren't done in the United States much any more, or they are jobs that nobody wants. And we need to keep these guys busy. We need to give them some job skills. And I am afraid we are going to throw this baby out with the bath water today.

Now, it may well be that we have to reform the Federal Prison Industries a bit. And I hear the talk about, well, we can find \$75 million for job training programs. Maybe that is true. But in the middle are these folks who are working in the Federal Prison Industries in my district who are earning a little bit of money, who are making a difference, and are providing products that the United States military needs.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak in opposition to this legislation. I represent a number of employees and inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution in Waseca, Minnesota, and they have a vested interest in this matter.

Federal Prison Industries employs approximately 200 inmates in Waseca. The jobs they have give these inmates real-life skills that offer opportunity for rehabilitation and a chance at success when they leave prison. The program is carefully overseen by trained prison employees.

Mr. Chairman, changes might be necessary to improve the FPI program, but I am not convinced that the legislation before us accomplishes that. H.R. 2965 would authorize a \$75